

Application No. 09/408,808

Docket No. 22-0074

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(114) for the ATM cell is determined from the VPI, and the ATM cell is transferred to that output port (116). The present invention may also provide for multicast switching (400). The VPI assigned to the ATM cell may be associated with a multicast output port. The ATM cells may be reproduced (426) and reassigned with a new VPI from a multicast group of VPIs (428). The reproduced cells are received at an input port of the satellite (430) for routing to the corresponding output ports.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 12, 17, 19, 21, 23, and 28 as follows:

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1. (Amended) In a processing satellite communications system including at least one processing satellite having a receiver and a transmitter for respectively receiving and transmitting a data cell, a method for virtual path switching of said data cell, the method comprising:

- receiving a data cell at one of a plurality of input ports of a processing satellite;
- examining an assigned virtual path identifier (VPI) in said data cell to determine a destination output port associated with said assigned VPI; and
- transferring said data cell to said destination output port based on said assigned VPI.

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12. (Amended) In a processing satellite communications system including at least one processing satellite having a receiver and a transmitter for respectively receiving and transmitting a data cell, a method for virtual path switching of said data cell, the method comprising:

- receiving a data cell at one of a plurality of input ports of said processing satellite;
- examining an assigned virtual path identifier (VPI) in said data cell to determine a destination output port associated with said assigned VPI;
- transferring said data cell to said destination output port;